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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002044

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2017
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: SETTLERS TEMPORARILY ERECT 5 NEW OUTPOSTS IN THE
WEST BANK

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Settler activists ascended five West Bank hilltops to establish new outposts on September 30. IDF forces and Israeli police maintained a low key presence at each site and began removing settlers and temporary dwellings on October 1. At Hashmonaim, west of Ramallah, four activists were arrested, and one policeman was lightly wounded. Settlers have publicly proclaimed their protests a success, although they told PolOff that they "are not under any illusions that (they will) actually stay there (in the outposts)." Efrat Rabbi Riskin told PolOff the settlers will seek to maintain a presence at the Eitam outpost. End Summary.

Five Hilltops: Claims of 1,000 Plus Demonstrators

¶2. (C) According to local press, on September 30 hundreds of settler activists ascended five separate West Bank hilltops: Eitam (near Efrat south of Bethlehem), Hill 1013 (near Hebron), Nofei Hashmonaim (west of Ramallah), Harhivi (near Elon Moreh settlement and Nablus), and Shvut Ami (near Kedumim settlement and Nablus). At each site, demonstrators erected booths to celebrate the Sukkot holiday, and arranged piles of rocks painted with the Star of David, which they labeled as synagogues. IDF forces blocked vehicle access, forcing settlers to walk to the sites. Settlers told PolOff October 1 that activists spent the night at each location and that they numbered more than 1,000.

¶3. (C) IDF forces and Israeli police maintained a low profile and informed settlers by loudspeaker that they were breaking the law by entering closed military zones. On the morning of October 1 security forces began removing temporary dwellings, flags, and settlers. Skirmishes with settlers broke out only at Hashmonaim, where four settlers were arrested and one policeman was lightly injured.

Settlers: Symbolic Action, Synagogue at Eitam

¶4. (C) Settler leaflets to promote the protests called for the "renewal of the Zionist-Jewish pioneering spirit" and asked participants to carry "food and water for 24 hours, walking shoes, warm clothing, sleeping bags...and if possible a tent or a sukkah." (Comment: These instructions may indicate that the settlers intended symbolic, temporary occupation of the new outposts. End Comment)

¶5. (C) Settler leader Eve Harrow, who demonstrated at Eitam, told PolOff on October 1 that the demonstrations were "our answer to our asinine government that is letting terrorists out of jail" and "we have rights too," but "we don't have any illusion that we'll be allowed to stay there

(in the outposts).\" (Note: On October 1, the GoI released 87 Palestinian prisoners. See septel.) Efrat Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (who has a large following) told PolOff that he presided over a ceremony at Eitam to lay a cornerstone for a new synagogue and that settlers are lobbying the GoI for permission to stay at the Eitam outpost, which is near Efrat south of Bethlehem.

WALLES